APPENDIX

SOME WORDS ABOUT *WAR AND PEACE*

(Published in *Russian Archive*, 1868)

On publishing this work, on which I have spent five years of uninterrupted and exceptionally strenuous labour under the best conditions of life, I wish to express my own view of it and thus counteract misunderstandings which might arise in the reader's mind. I do not want readers of this book to see in it, or look for, what I did not wish, or was unable, to express, and I should like to direct their attention to what I wished to say but owing to the conditions of the work could not enlarge on. Neither my time nor capacity allowed me fully to accomplish what I intended, and I now avail myself of the hospitality of a specialist periodical to state, though but briefly and incompletely, the author's view of his work for those whom it may interest.

(1) What is *War and Peace*? It is not a novel, even less is it an epic poem, and still less an historical chronicle. *War and Peace* is what the author wished and was able to express in the form in which it is expressed. Such an announcement of disregard of conventional form in an artistic production might seem presumptuous were it premeditated, and were there no precedents for it. But the history of Russian literature since the time of Pushkin not merely affords many examples of such deviation from European forms, but does not offer a single example of the contrary. From Gogol's *Dead Souls* to Dostoevsky's *House of the Dead* in the recent period of Russian literature there is not a single artistic prose work, rising at all above mediocrity, which quite fits into the form of a novel, epic, or story.

(2) *The character of the period.* When the first part of this book appeared some readers told me that this is not sufficiently defined in my work. To that reproach I make the following reply: I know what 'the characteristics of the period' are that people do not find in my novel—the horrors of serfdom, the immuring of wives, the flogging of grown-up sons, Saltykova,* and so on; but I do not think that these characteristics of the period as they exist in our imagination are correct, and I did not wish to reproduce them. On studying letters, diaries, and traditions, I did not find the horrors of such savagery to a greater extent than I find them now, or at any other period. In those days also people loved, envied, sought truth and virtue, and were carried away by

passion; and there was the same complex mental and moral life among the upper classes, who were in some instances even more refined than now. If we have come to believe in the perversity and coarse violence of that period, that is only because the traditions, memoirs, stories, and novels that have been handed to us, record for the most part exceptional cases of violence and brutality. To suppose that the predominant characteristic of that period was turbulence, is as unjust as it would be for a man, seeing nothing but the tops of trees beyond a hill, to conclude that there was nothing to be found in that locality but trees. That period had its own characteristics (as every epoch has), which resulted from the predominant alienation of the upper class from other classes, from the religious philosophy of the time, from peculiarities of education, from the habit of using the French language, and so forth. That is the character I tried to depict as well as I could.

(3) *The use of the French language in a Russian book.* Why in my book do Russians as well as Frenchmen sometimes speak Russian and sometimes French? The reproach that in a Russian book people speak and write French, is like the reproach of a man who, looking at a portrait, notices black spots (shadows) on it which do not exist in nature. The painter is not to blame if to some people the shadow he has put on the face of the portrait appears as a black spot non-existent in nature; he is only to blame if such shadows are put on wrongly or coarsely. Dealing with the beginning of the nineteenth century, and depicting the Russians of a certain class and Napoleon and other Frenchmen who had so direct a part in the life of that epoch, I was involuntarily carried away to an unnecessary extent by the form in which they expressed their French way of thought. And so, without denying that the shadows put on by me are probably incorrect and coarse, I would only ask those to whom it seems absurd that Napoleon should speak now Russian and now French, to realize that this seems so to them only because they, like the man looking at the portrait, notice a black spot under the nose instead of observing the face with its lights and shades.

(4) *The names of the people in the book*. Bolkonsky, Drubetskoy, Bilibin, Kuragin and others, suggest well-known Russian names. When confronting fictitious with historical characters I felt it awkward for the ear to make a Count Rastopchin speak to a Prince Pronsky, Strelsky, or other princes or counts bearing such invented (single or hyphenated) names. Bolkonsky or Drubetskoy, though they are neither Volkonsky nor Trubetskoy, sound familiar and natural in a Russian aristocratic circle. I was unable to devise for all my characters names which did not sound false to my ear, such as Bezukhov and Rostov, and I could

not find any other way to overcome this difficulty except by taking at random names quite familiar to a Russian ear and changing some of the letters in them. I should be very sorry if the similarity between the invented names and real ones should suggest to anyone that I wished to describe this or that actual person, more especially as the literary activity which consists of describing real people who exist or have existed has nothing in common with the activity I was engaged on.

M. D. Akhrosimova and Denisov are the only persons to whom I involuntarily and unreflectingly gave names closely resembling those of two particularly characteristic and charming people of the real society of that time. That was my mistake, arising from the specially typical character of those two persons, but my mistake in this matter is limited to their mere introduction, and readers will probably agree that nothing resembling the actual facts of their lives is ascribed to these characters in the novel. All the other people are entirely invented, and have for me no definite prototypes in tradition or in reality.

(5) *The divergence between my description of historical events and that given by the historians*. This was not accidental but inevitable. An historian and an artist describing an historic epoch have two quite different tasks before them. As an historian would be wrong if he tried to present an historical person in his entirety, in all the complexity of his relations with all sides of life, so the artist would fail to perform his task were he to represent the person always in his historic significance. Kutuzov did not always hold a telescope, point at the enemy, and ride a white horse. Rastopchin was not always setting fire with a torch to the Voronovsky House (which in fact he never did) and the Empress Marya Fyodorovna did not always stand in an ermine cloak leaning her hand on the code of laws, but that is how the popular imagination pictures them.

For an historian considering the achievement of a certain aim, there are heroes; for the artist treating of man's relation to all sides of life there cannot and should not be heroes, but there should be men.

An historian is sometimes obliged by bending the truth to subordinate all the actions of an historical personage to the one idea he has ascribed to that person. The artist, on the contrary, finds the very singleness of that idea incompatible with his problem, and tries to understand and show not a certain actor but a man.

In the description of the events themselves the difference is still sharper and more essential.

The historian has to deal with the results of an event, the artist with the fact of the event. An historian in describing a battle says: 'The left flank of such and such an army was advanced to attack such and such

a village and drove out the enemy, but was compelled to retire; then the cavalry, which was sent to attack, overthrew . . .' and so on. But these words have no meaning for an artist and do not actually touch the event itself. Either from his own experience, or from letters, memoirs, and accounts, the artist realizes a certain event to himself, and very often (to take the example of a battle) the deductions the historian permits himself to make as to the activity of such and such armies prove to be the very opposite of the artist's deductions. The difference of the results arrived at is also to be explained by the sources from which the two draw their information. For the historian (to keep to the case of a battle) the chief source is found in the reports of the commanding officers and of the commander-in-chief. The artist can draw nothing from such sources; they tell him nothing and explain nothing to him. More than that: the artist turns away from them as he finds inevitable falsehood in them. To say nothing of the fact that after any battle the two sides nearly always describe it in quite contradictory ways, in every description of a battle there is a necessary lie, resulting from the need of describing in a few words the actions of thousands of men spread over several miles, and subject to most violent moral excitement under the influence of fear, shame, and death.

In descriptions of battles it is generally said that such and such armies were sent to attack such and such points, and were then ordered to retire and so on, as if assuming that discipline, which subjects tens of thousand of men to the will of one man on a parade-ground, will have the same effect where it is a question of life and death. Anyone who has been in a war knows how untrue that is,* yet the reports are based on that assumption, and on them the military descriptions. Make a round of the troops immediately after a battle, or even next day or the day after before the reports have been drawn up, and ask any of the soldiers and senior and junior officers how the affair went: you will be told what all these men experienced and saw, and you will form a majestic, complex, infinitely varied, depressing and indistinct impression; and from no one—least of all from the commander-in-chief—will you learn what the whole affair was like. Two or three days later the reports begin to be handed in. Gossips begin to narrate how things happened which they did not see; finally a general report is drawn up, and on this report the general opinion of the army is formed. Everyone is glad to exchange his own doubts and questionings for this deceptive, but clear and always flattering, presentation. Question a month or two later a man who was in the battle, and you will no longer feel in this account the raw, vital material that was there before, but he will answer according to the report. Thus I was told of the battle of

Borodino by many lively, clever participants in that affair. They all told me one and the same thing, and all in accord with the false accounts of Mikhailovsky-Danilievsky, Glinka,* and others: even the details they mentioned were all identical, though the narrators had been several miles apart from one another.

After the fall of Sevastopol the Commander of the Artillery, Kryzhanovsky, sent me the reports of the officers of artillery from all the bastions, and asked me to draw up a report from these (more than twenty) separate accounts. I am sorry I did not take copies of them. It would have been the best example of the naive, inevitable, military falsehoods from which reports are made. I imagine that many of my comrades who drew up those reports will laugh on reading these lines, at the recollection of how they, by order of their superior, wrote what they could not know. All who have had experience of war know how capable Russians are of doing their work in a war, and how little fit they are to describe it with the boastful falsity indispensable for that purpose. Everyone knows that in our armies that duty of drawing up reports and dispatches is generally carried out by men of foreign birth.

I say all this to show the inevitability of falsehood in military descriptions which serve as material for military historians, and thus to show how unavoidable are frequent disagreements between artists and historians in their understanding of historical events. But besides this necessary error in the narration of historical events, I noticed in the histories of the epoch on which I was engaged (probably as a result of the habit of grouping events to express them briefly, and of conforming to the tragic import of those events) a special kind of high-flown diction in which the falsehood and perversion extended not merely to the occurrences but also to the interpretation and significance of them. Often when studying the two chief historical works on that epoch, Thiers and Mikhailovsky-Danilievsky, I felt perplexed that such books could have been printed and read. To say nothing of the fact that they present the same events in a most serious, significant tone, citing the sources they have drawn on, and are yet in diametrical opposition to one another, in these histories I came across such accounts that I did not know whether to laugh or to cry, remembering that these books are the chief memorials of that epoch and have had millions of readers. I will give a single example from the work of the famous historian Thiers. After telling how Napoleon brought with him forged paper rubles, he says: '*Relevant l'emploi de ces moyens par un acte de bienfaisance* digne de lui et de l'armée française, *il fit distribuer des secours aux incendiés. Mais les vivres étant trop précieux pour être donnés longtemps à ces étrangers, la*

plupart ennemis, Napoléon aima mieux leur fournir de l'argent, et il leur fit distribuer des roubles papier.'[1]

This passage when taken by itself amazes one, I will not say by its immorality but simply by its stupidity; but in the whole book it does not surprise one, for it is quite in accord with the general high-flown pompous style, devoid of any direct meaning.

So the tasks of artist and historian are quite different, and the reader should not be surprised when my book disagrees with an historian in the descriptions of events or persons.

But an artist must not forget that the popular conception of historical persons and events is not based on fancy, but on historical documents in so far as the historians have been able to group them, and therefore, though he understands and presents them differently, the artist like the historian should be guided by historical material. *Wherever in my novel historical persons speak or act, I have invented nothing, but have used historical material of which I have accumulated a whole library during my work. I do not think it necessary to cite the titles of those books here, but could cite them at any time in proof of what I say.*

(6) Finally, the sixth and for me most important consideration relates to the small significance that, in my conception, should be ascribed to so-called great men in historical events.

Studying so tragic an epoch, so rich in the importance of its events, so near to our own time, and regarding which so many varied traditions survive, I arrived at the evident fact that the causes of historical events when they take place cannot be grasped by our intelligence. To say (which seems to everyone very simple) that the causes of the events of 1812 lay in Napoleon's domineering disposition and the patriotic firmness of the Emperor Alexander I, is as meaningless as to say that the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire were that a certain barbarian led his people westwards and a certain Roman emperor ruled his State badly, or that an immense hill that was being levelled toppled over because the last labourer struck it with his spade.

The cause of such an event, in which millions of people fought one another and killed half a million men, cannot be the will of one man. Just as one man could not have levelled the hill, so no single man could cause five hundred thousand to die. But what were the causes? One historian says it was the aggressive spirit of the French and the patriotism

[1] 'Dignifying these measures by an act of charity *worthy of himself and of the French army*, he let relief be distributed to those who had been burnt out. But as food was too precious to be given for a long time to foreigners, who were for the most part enemies, Napoleon preferred to supply them with money, and had paper rubles distributed to them.'

of the Russians. Others speak of the democratic element Napoleon's hordes carried abroad, and of Russia's need to form relations with Europe, and so forth. But why did millions of people begin to kill one another? Who told them to do it? It would seem that it was clear to each of them that this could not benefit any of them but would be worse for them all. Why did they do it? Endless retrospective conjectures can be made, and are made, of the causes of this senseless event, but the immense number of these explanations, and their concurrence in one purpose, only proves that the causes were innumerable and that not one of them deserves to be called the cause.

Why did millions of people kill one another when it has been known since the world began that it is physically and morally bad to do so? Because it was such an inevitable necessity that in doing it men fulfilled the elemental zoological law which bees fulfil when they kill one another in autumn, and which causes male animals to destroy one another. One can give no other reply to that terrible question.

This truth is not only evident, but is so innate in every man's consciousness that it would not be worth while proving it were there not another sentiment in man which convinces himself that he is free at each moment that he commits an action.

Taking a wide view of history we are indubitably convinced of a sempiternal law by which events occur. Looking at it from a personal point of view we are convinced of the opposite.

A man who kills another, Napoleon who orders the crossing of the Niemen, you or I handing in a petition to be admitted to the army, or lifting or lowering our arm, are all indubitably convinced that our every action is based on reasonable grounds and on our own freewill, and that it depends on us whether we do this or that. This conviction is so inherent in us and so precious to each of us, that in spite of the proofs of history and the statistics of crime (which convince us of absence of freedom in the actions of other people) we extend the consciousness of our freedom to all our actions.

The contradiction seems insoluble. When committing an act I am convinced that I do it by my own freewill, but considering that action in its connection with the general life of mankind (in its historical significance), I am convinced that this action was predestined and inevitable. Where is the error?

Psychological observations of man's capacity for retrospectively supplying a whole series of supposedly free reasons for something that has been done (as I intend to expound in more detail in another place) confirm the assumption that man's consciousness of freedom in the commission of a certain kind of action is erroneous. But the same

psychological observations prove that there is another series of actions in which the consciousness of freedom is not retrospective but instantaneous and indubitable. In spite of all that the materialists may say, I can undoubtedly commit an act or refrain from it if the act relates to me alone. I have undoubtedly by my own will just lifted and lowered my arm. I can at once stop writing. You can at once stop reading. I can certainly, by my own will and free from all obstacles, transfer my thoughts to America, or to any mathematical problem I choose. Testing my freedom I can lift and forcibly lower my hand in the air. I have done so. But near me stands a child and I raise my hand above him and want to lower it with the same force onto the child. I *cannot* do this. A dog rushes at that child, and I *cannot* refrain from lifting my hand at the dog. I am on parade, and cannot help following the movement of the regiment. In action I cannot refrain from attacking with my regiment or from running when all around me run—*I cannot.* When I appear in Court as the defender of an accused person, I cannot help speaking or knowing what I am going to say. I cannot help blinking when a blow is directed at my eye.

So there are two kinds of actions: some that do and others that do not depend on my will. And the mistake causing the contradiction is due only to the fact that I wrongly transfer the consciousness of freedom (which properly accompanies every act relating to my *ego,* to the highest abstractions of my existence) to actions performed in conjunction with others and dependent on the coincidence of other wills with my own. To define the limits of freedom and dependence is very difficult and the definition of those limits forms the sole and essential problem of psychology, but observing the conditions of the manifestation of our greatest freedom and greatest dependence, we cannot but see that the more abstract and therefore the less connected with the activity of others our activity is, the more free it is; and on the contrary, the more our activity is connected with other people the less free it is.

The strongest, most indissoluble, most burdensome, and constant bond with other men is what is called power over others, which in its real meaning is only the greatest dependence on them.

Having wrongly or rightly become fully convinced of this in the course of my work, I naturally was unable—when describing the historical events of 1805, 1807 and especially of 1812 in which this law of predetermination* is most prominently displayed—to attribute importance to the actions of those who thought they controlled the events, but who introduced less free human activity into them than did all the other participants. The activity of these people interested me only as an illustration of the law of predetermination which in my

opinion guides history, and of that psychological law which compels a man who commits actions under the greatest compulsion to supply in his imagination a whole series of retrospective reflections to prove his freedom to himself.

harshness, developing a theory of autocratic power and the duty of slavish submission to authority 'according to the law of God'.

1284 *Godfreys*: Godfrey of Boulogne was a leader of the First Crusade at the end of the eleventh century.

Peter the Hermit: an ascetic French monk who, tradition says, inspired the First Crusade.

Minnesingers: wandering minstrel troubadors, often of knightly rank, who in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries travelled chiefly in Swabia and Austria, singing love lyrics as well as crusading songs.

1286 *the French go to Mexico*: in 1864, aided by French forces, Maximilian secured the throne of Mexico, but after the conclusion of the American Civil War the French had to leave Mexico as the United States would not tolerate European interference on American soil. Maximilian was shot by the Mexicans in 1867, when Tolstoy was writing the last part of *War and Peace*.

an army enters Bohemia: this refers to the Austro-Prussian War of 1866.

1308 *miracle of Joshua the son of Nun*: a reference to the staying of the sun and moon in their orbits in order to allow the devastation of enemy troops (Joshua 10: 12–13). [AM]

APPENDIX

1309 *Saltykova*: Darya Nikolaevna Saltykova, popularly called 'Saltychikha' (1730–1801), was a landed proprietress who owned 600 serfs and in seven years tortured 139 of them to death. By bribery and family influence she escaped punishment for a while, but in 1776 a complaint reached Catherine the Great, and after a trial that lasted six years Saltykova was sentenced to death; this sentence, however, was commuted to exposure in the pillory and confinement for life in a convent.

1312 *how untrue that is*: after the description of the battle of Schön Grabern had appeared in the first part of my novel, I was told of Nikolai Nikolaevich Muravyov Karsky's remark about that description—a remark which confirmed my conviction. He, a commander-in-chief, remarked that he had never read a truer account of a battle, and that his own experience had convinced him of the impossibility of a commander-in-chief's orders being carried out during a battle. [LNT]

1313 *Mikhailovsky-Danilievsky, Glinka*: the chief Russian writers on the campaign of 1812.

1316 *predetermination*: it is noteworthy that almost all those who have written of the campaign of 1812 have seen something special and fateful in the event. [LNT]